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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9921  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8590  
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UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 001339

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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS  
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage September 9 on the various measures currently being pondered by the Ma Ying-jeou Administration to stimulate Taiwan's stock market and economy; on the surge in global stock prices Monday after Washington announced the bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac; and on continued investigation into former President Chen Shui-bian's money laundering and state affairs fund cases. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" alleged that the United States must have a role in the recent interaction across the Taiwan Strait. The column also reminded Ma that strengthening the island's national defense will not necessarily compromise Taiwan's wish to have more space in the international community. End summary.

"Cross-Strait Interactions under the New International Reality"

Deputy Editor-in-Chief Kuo Chen-lung wrote in the International Column of the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 300,000] (9/9):

"The remarks by [China's] Taiwan Affairs Office Director Wang Yi Sunday revealed Beijing's latest attitude towards its talks [with Taiwan]. [China's] Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait Chairman Chen Yunlin will be coming to negotiate with Taipei in late October, and the issues both sides will discuss will be all-inclusive; almost everything can be talked about. This is [Beijing's] response to the earnest expectations of the Ma Ying-jeou Administration. The Presidential Office's making public [the contents of] an interview [by Ma] with the Mexican daily, "El Sol de Mexico", in return, has initiated a new round of goodwill gesture [between Taipei and Beijing]. ...

"Prior to the publication of the press release about [Ma's] interview, National Security Council Chairman Su Chi had arrived in Washington D.C. September 1 for a secret visit. A reasonable guess [about Su's visit] was that both sides of the Taiwan Strait had already had some rehearsals and communications beforehand on things they each wanted to say. Thus, it was not until after Su had got a green light from Washington, which also expressed its support, following his meetings with relevant U.S. officials, including a deputy national security advisor and those in charge of Asia-Pacific issues, in which they had discussed and went over the process related to the second round of cross-Strait interactions, that the Presidential Office released the content of Ma's interview with "El Sol de Mexico" via the Central News Agency. Getting the international community involved [in cross-Strait interactions] is clear proof that the Ma Administration has becoming increasingly nimble in its diplomatic methods. [Such a move] not only can avoid doubts from the United States but will also help to earn Taiwan some assistance when it comes to the issue of Taiwan's international space.

"Ma's '1992 Consensus' has reassured Beijing, but his 'no unification and no independence' has made Beijing agonize as well; in particular, some people are concerned that [offering Taiwan more] international space will only make Ma more reluctant to unify with

China. As a result, Ma's statement that 'both sides of the Taiwan Strait are [in] a special non-state-to-state relationship' was a re-definition of cross-Strait relations, which are not the 'special state-to-state relationship' as described by Lee Teng-hui and are certainly different from the 'one state on either side [of the Strait]' doctrine advocated by Chen Shui-bian. ...

"In fact, in the interview Ma merely touched on, but did not elucidate or deny, what Taiwan really is. However, Presidential Office Spokesman [Wang Yu-chi], in a failed and inferior attempt to elaborate on Ma's idea, claimed that such a [special non-state-to-state] relationship is one of 'region to region' under [Taiwan's] Statute Governing the Relations between the Peoples of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area. [Wang's elaboration] has instead stripped [Ma's statement] of room for ambiguity. ...

"In reality, strengthening [the island's] national defense versus improving cross-Strait relations can be free of contradiction. [Taiwan's moves to] purchase arms from the United States and conduct the Han Kuang military exercises are ways to accumulate bargaining chips for its future negotiations [with China] and to prevent itself from being forced into signing a peace treaty under [China's] threat of force. Similarly, a diplomatic truce does not mean that foreign service staff is 'having holidays in the office.' [Ed. Note: taking a vacation on the job.] There are so many types of tasks that can be performed to expand [Taiwan's] international space. Those diplomats who complain of having nothing to do only show their incompetence. ..."

YOUNG